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**General and complete disarmament**

# Relationship between disarmament and development

## Report of the Secretary-General**

*Summary*

The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 55/33 L. In accordance with the programme of activities adopted by the high-level Steering Group on Disarmament and Development, established by the Secretary-General in May 1999, and within the financial constraints of the Organization, a number of activities were undertaken to promote a better understanding of the disarmament and development relationship in the context of current international relations.

## Contents

| | | *Paragraphs* | *Page* |
|---|---|---|---|
| I. | Introduction | 1–3 | 2 |
| II. | Action taken | 4–11 | 2 |
| III. | Information received from Governments | 12 | 3 |

* A/56/50.

** The finalization of the present report was dependent on inputs from other component departments/agencies represented in the high-level Steering Group on Disarmament and Development.

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# I. Introduction

1. Since 1987, the General Assembly has annually requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the action programme adopted at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, which was held at United Nations Headquarters in September 1987. Paragraph 35 (ix) of the action programme emphasized the need to strengthen the central role of the United Nations and its appropriate organs in the field of disarmament and development in promoting an interrelated perspective of these issues with the overall objective of promoting international peace and security.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/33 L, entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development". In that resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to take action, through appropriate organs and within available resources, for the implementation of the action programme adopted at the International Conference and to report to the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session.

3. In an earlier report (A/54/254), the Secretary-General referred to the programme of activities adopted by the high-level Steering Group on Disarmament and Development, which held its inaugural meeting in May 1999. A salient feature of that programme was organizing periodic seminars/symposia to focus attention on specific issues falling within the framework of disarmament and development in the context of current international relations, as well as providing a forum where relevant United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations and other international agencies could share their experience in areas of common or overlapping concerns. In the same report, the Secretary-General noted that, in view of the continuing financial constraints of the Organization, the activities devoted to disarmament and development would become more affordable with voluntary contributions from Member States.

# II. Action taken

4. In accordance with the framework of activities agreed by the Steering Group, the Departments for Disarmament Affairs and of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat jointly organized a symposium on 26 April 2001 at United Nations Headquarters to examine the interrelationship between armed conflict, military expenditures and development. The panellists were drawn from the World Bank, the Emerging Markets Partnership and the Center for International Development and Conflict Management of the University of Maryland. The issues discussed covered the following topics: the action-reaction effect of military spending within a region or subregion, particularly between neighbouring States; the impact of armed conflict on military spending levels; the impact of high military spending by some States on their budget allocations for social and economic development; the question of threat perceptions and threat assessments underlying arms acquisition decisions by States; and the relationship between military transparency, security sector reform and development.

5. During the discussion, reference was made to the United Nations role in addressing military expenditure issues, such as reducing or freezing spending levels. It was indicated that the United Nations agenda currently includes arms transparency issues and that, in support of openness in military matters, the Secretariat maintains and operates two global transparency instruments: the Register of Conventional Arms, which has been in operation since 1992, and the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures, which has been in existence since 1980.

6. The Departments for Disarmament Affairs and of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat participated in the Second International Ecological Scientific Conference, held in Moscow on 30 and 31 January 2001, which discussed environmentally safe technologies for disarmament, military conversion and development. The conference was organized by the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences. Representatives of the Departments also visited a military conversion facility, where methods for the industrial utilization of demilitarized munitions were demonstrated. In addition, representatives of the Department of Disarmament Affairs visited the Salut machine-building production plant in Moscow, where a presentation was made on a 20-megawatt gas-turbine power station developed from converted fighter aircraft engines.

7. The Department for Disarmament Affairs participated in a conference on corruption in the arms trade, organized by Transparency International, at

Cambridge University, United Kingdom, with the support of the Government of Sweden. An underlying concern of the conference was that corruption distorts the international market for arms, often placing an unjustifiable burden on low-income countries and adding to more widespread political instability, especially at the regional level. It was also observed that the problem was twofold, in that defence spending in many developing countries was rising as rapidly as were the demands on scarce resources for their social development. The conference considered the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to be a significant global transparency instrument.

8. The Departments for Disarmament Affairs and of Economic and Social Affairs collaborated on an op-ed article, entitled "A peace dividend for developing countries would pay off", which appeared in the 22 December 2000 issue of the *International Herald Tribune* and was reproduced in a number of newspapers around the world.

9. The Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development for Latin America and the Caribbean organized a workshop in Lima on 11 June 2001, on the theme "Disarmament and development", which was attended, inter alia, by members of the diplomatic community based in Peru. Javier Perez de Cuellar, President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Peru and former Secretary-General of the United Nations, inaugurated the workshop. In his speech, Mr. de Cuellar referred to the relationship between disarmament and development as an irrefutable reality that deserved greater recognition by Governments. In view of declining levels of official development assistance, he observed that developing countries would have to depend more on mobilizing their own resources for development and, to that end, they must examine the percentages of their gross national product and central government budgets that are devoted to military expenditures. The Department for Disarmament Affairs, in its presentation, provided a historical background to the subject matter, mentioning the Steering Group and the current framework in which issues related to disarmament and development are being addressed by the Secretariat. The panel of speakers also included official representatives of the Russian Federation and the United States of America, who made presentations on conversion issues as well as dual-use technology, both of military and commercial origin, including new technologies under development, that could be of benefit to the development of low-income countries and for reducing military expenditures by lowering the cost of production and maintenance of military equipment.

10. The Department for Disarmament Affairs continued its process of consultations with independent experts to elicit their views and perspectives on the changing paradigm of disarmament and development in the context of current international relations, with a view to ascertaining the configuration of informed opinion on this subject. The second of a series of consultations was held with the Center for International Development and Conflict Management of the University of Maryland in April 2001.

11. In a note verbale dated 22 March 2001, the Secretary-General drew the attention of Member States to operative paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 55/33 L, in which they were invited to communicate by 15 April 2001, their views and proposals for the implementation of the action programme adopted at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, as well as any other views and proposals with a view to achieving the goals of the action programme, within the framework of current international relations. To date, the Secretary-General has received one reply, which is set out below. Any further replies received will be issued as an addendum to the present report.

# III. Information received from Governments

12. Information received from Governments is set out below.

## Sweden on behalf of the European Union

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[7 June 2001]

### Joint European Union reply to General Assembly resolution 55/33 L

At the fifty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly, the member States of the European Union supported the consensus on General Assembly resolution 55/33 L, entitled "Relationship between

disarmament and development". The member States of the European Union wish to provide the following common reply to paragraph 3 of the resolution, which invites the United Nations Member States to communicate to the Secretary-General their views and proposals for the implementation of the action programme adopted at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, as well as any other views and proposals with a view to achieving the goals of the action programme, within the framework of current international relations.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, and the EFTA country Norway align themselves with the following common reply of the member States of the European Union on General Assembly resolution 55/33 L.

* * *

1. The European Union continues to attach importance to the action programme adopted at the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, and reaffirms its commitments in the fields of disarmament and development. The European Union reiterates its determination to adopt, both individually and collectively, appropriate measures to implement these commitments.

2. The European Union attaches great importance to the efforts to curb the excessive accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons, and considers this to be of major importance to the prospects of development for States affected by a wide availability of such weapons. In the view of the European Union, assistance to conflict-prone States or regions should be provided in order to promote security, disarmament and demobilization, as well as reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society, as an integrated part of social and economic development programmes. To this end, the European Union Development Council adopted a resolution on small arms on 21 May 1999. The document reaffirms the European Union's determination to combat the excessive spread of small arms and light weapons around the world, and emphasizes the connection between disarmament and development. In particular, it is recognized that the effective disarmament and demobilization of combatants, and their subsequent rehabilitation and reintegration into civil society, are of vital importance to development. The European Union and its member States are financing numerous projects in, inter alia, Cambodia and Georgia/South Ossetia with an integrated approach to disarmament in the field of small arms and development.

3. As part of the effort in the field of small arms and light weapons, the European Union has actively pursued a successful outcome for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

4. Also in the field of anti-personnel mines, the European Union sees a connection between disarmament and development. The use of anti-personnel mines not only causes immense human suffering but also inhibits development since the land where they are planted cannot be used for civilian purposes. Creating better conditions for people and societies after the end of conflicts often includes the clearing of these mines. The destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines also contributes to development since the destruction of these weapons means that they can never again be placed in the ground. The European Union contributes vast amounts of money each year to measures aiming at ridding the world of anti-personnel mines in order to create better conditions for all.

5. The European Union's dedication to the global disarmament and development effort is further evidenced by its hosting of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Cooperation Initiative Conference, held in Brussels on 8 and 9 March 2001. The purpose of the Initiative is to offer a forum for the exchange of information on projects for reallocating to civilian use both human and economic resources that have previously been devoted to the development of weapons of mass destruction.

6. In addition to the member States of the European Union, the Conference was attended by, inter alia, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and other newly independent States, Canada, Japan and the United States of America, and was held in a positive and constructive atmosphere producing useful results.

7. The European Union is dedicated to the promotion of multilateralism as providing the international framework for shaping the relationship between disarmament, development and security, based on interdependence among nations and mutuality of

interests, and sees the Initiative as an example of a process of fostering an interrelated perspective on disarmament, development and security, in the wider context of conflict prevention.

8. The European Union urges United Nations member States to commit themselves to cooperative projects with a view to achieving a conversion to the peaceful use of resources being spent on development of weapons of mass destruction. The European Union firmly believes that such conversion is an important way in which the disarmament effort can be beneficial to socio-economic development.

9. While reminding all States of their existing international legal obligations in the field of disarmament, the European Union further urges those States that have not yet done so to accede to the relevant international agreements and instruments designed to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the spread of anti-personnel mines, and further to join in the global effort to prevent the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons, thereby facilitating peaceful cooperation between States, which is crucial to socio-economic development.